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SUBJECT: EGYPT: PEACEKEEPERS HEAD TO SOUTHERN SUDAN

1. On June 21, President Mubarak reviewed Egyptian troops preparing for peacekeeping missions in south Sudan. The President reminded the troops, and the public, that Sudan would constitute Egypt's sixth active peacekeeping mission under the UN umbrella. Minister of Defense Tantawi highlighted Egypt's peacekeeping efforts as a declaration "to the world that peace is Egypt's strategic choice."

2. The initial contingent of 800 troops reportedly began deployment on June 25, with the UN coordinating transportation. Egypt's forces in Sudan are to include a command group element, an infantry company, an engineering company, a demining company, a transportation platoon, and a field hospital. Equipped with over 800 vehicles and supplies appropriate to its diverse mission, the Egyptian contingent may be augmented by more troops in July.

3. Egypt's presence in southern Sudan complements Egyptian military observers and a military medical facility in Darfur. In addition to Egypt's political involvement in helping Sudan recover from years of conflict -- including recent efforts to broker an agreement between the GOS and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) -- these practical contributions of manpower and expertise are indications of the great importance Egypt places on the stability of its neighbor to the south.

4. Khartoum minimize considered.

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